The Story of Two Brothers: One in Sin, One in Worship

Islamic Stories - Volume 5

Written by Mansoor Ali Shah

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means-electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise-without the prior written permission of the copyright holder.

The Story of Two Brothers: One in Sin, One in Worship

Narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA):

Abu Hurairah (RA): “I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say:

Two men among the Bani Israel were brothers. One devoted himself entirely to acts of worship, while the other persistently indulged in sin. The devot man, witnessing his brother’s sinful behaviour, often reprimanded him.

The Voice of Piety:

The Worshipper:

“Desist from sin.”

To which the sinner would respond:

The Sinner’s Defence:

The Sinner:

“My matter is with the Noble Lord. Have you been sent as a watcher and guardian over me?”

A Reckless Oath:

On one occasion, the worshipper declared:

The Worshipper:

“By Allah (SWT), He will not forgive you!” — or he said — “He will never admit you to Paradise.”

The Divine Verdict: Mercy and Accountability

Then Allah (SWT) caused both of their souls to be taken. They were brought before the Lord of the Worlds. Allah (SWT) addressed the worshipper:

Divine Rebuke:

Allah (SWT):

“Did you possess complete knowledge of Me? Or were you in control of that which is in My hand?”

To the sinner, Allah (SWT) said:

Divine Mercy:

Allah (SWT):

“Go! Enter Paradise by virtue of My mercy.”

As for the worshipper, Allah (SWT) commanded the angels:

Divine Command:

“Take him to the Fire.”

Mortality and the Need for Divine Favour:

Death is inevitable and comes but once. Therefore, sacrificing one's life for the sake of truth and seeking protection from misguidance is imperative. Ultimately, every individual is in need of Allah's (SWT) grace.

Lessons from the Parable: Humility, Caution, and Restraint

From this account, we learn that every virtuous believer should constantly seek refuge in Allah (SWT) and implore Him for well-being. One must avoid misleading influences and those who mislead others. Caution must be exercised even regarding the satanic elements among humans and jinn.

The forces of good and evil are in perpetual conflict. Evil appears to be in the majority, and goodness in the minority. The number of virtuous individuals has always been fewer than that of the wicked. However, the validity of good or evil is not determined by quantity but by the decree of Allah (SWT). That which Allah (SWT) has declared evil will always remain evil—even if every soul in creation were to commit it and deem it acceptable.

Likewise, goodness is only that which Allah (SWT) has deemed virtuous. Even if the entire world were to redefine virtue, only that which conforms to His command will be considered good in His sight.

The Charge of the Righteous: Firmness Amidst Corruption

This story imparts an essential lesson to the pious:

they must be resolute in their resolve. They should remain unaffected by corrupt surroundings, not merely avoiding evil but confronting it with steadfastness and determination. In doing so, they cast the aura of their resolve over evildoers, becoming influences upon their environment rather than products of it.

The Consequences of a Reckless Tongue:

Abu Hurairah (RA):

“By Him in whose hand is my soul, the worshipper uttered a word which destroyed his world and his Hereafter.”

From this, it is evident that no one should ever declare of a specific individual that Allah (SWT) will never forgive them. This includes statements such as:

“You are a disbeliever.”

“You are destined for Hell.”

“You shall never enter Paradise.”

The Danger of Hastiness in Religious Judgements:

In present times, people rush to issue religious verdicts without a moment's patience. Upon witnessing someone commit a wrong action, they hastily declare a verdict of disbelief, unaware of the catastrophic consequences illustrated by this Hadith. Such behaviour must be avoided at all costs.